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I. CUSTOMS AND CHARACTERISTIC WAYS OF LIFE

184 The Chinese imperial system was strikingly successful in fostering common basic attitudes among the peoples which it absorbed within its ever-widening sphere, but local and regional sub-cultures, brought into the imperial order at different times throughout more than two millenia did not lose all of their characteristic traits. In the East China Region, for example the oldest "Chinese" area was Shantung, portions of which were settled in the second millenium B. C. When centuries later the coastal areas of Fukien were absorbed by imperial China, the terrain and climate . the dependence on the seas and rivers for livelihood, meant that a way of life, a culture markedly different from any in North China, persisted and developed. A rough analogy may be drawn with Western Europe. Many basic attitudes and values are common to "Christian Europe" from Sicily to the Arctic. yet history and geography have made this area diverse in customs and ways of life. The diversity is less in the 1,000-mile long arc of the East China Region, partly because its cultures were never set off from one another by the nation-state boundaries that divide modern Europe.

841 181 There are other factors which give to most of the area we are now considering important uniformities in culture. The expansion of "Chinese culture" from Honan and Shantung into

24 18 the whole of south China was essentially the steady outward push of an efficient agricultural technique which displaced the more primitive aboriginal food-gatherers and primitive slash-burn agriculturists, abosrbed most of these people into its operation and drove the remnants higher and higher into the hills. The characteristically Chinese agriculture is intensive; that is it uses large quantities of human labor in irrigating, fertilizing, and cultivating land for maximum yields. Its unit of socio-economic organization is the village, composed of those families which cultivate the land within easy walking distance of its center. It was in the villages of rural China spread over a vast area to exploit the land through a common technology, that the characteristic way of life developed. It is his family's village which is "home" to Chinese of all classes, no matter how far he may wander or how Westernized his life may have become. There are the ties with his own family's past, symbolized by the ancestral temple and the family or clan burial ground. There are the other families with which his own has built an enduring network of reciprocal favors and obligations. It is in the farming villages that Communist party workers now seek to bring about fundamental changes in the way of life and to break up the old complex of family and local loyalties.

62 18 What are the common patterns of village life from the plains of Shantung to the narrow, crowded flood-plains of coastal Chekiang and Fukien? We shall sketch these before discussing

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181 variations represented by urban life.

A. The Pattern of Village Life

511 First of all, life in the farming village is meager. In Shantung in 1932 there was .45 acres of cultivated land per person; the richer semi-tropical province of Chekiang had only .3 acres for each person.[1] Farm families save everything; fecal matter and refuse go into a pit near which a pig is kept. and at the time of spring fertilizing the material from the pit is mixed with topsoil or water and spread on the fields. Grass and grainstalks are carefully husbanded to be used as fodder for the farm animal, by no means one animal to a family and as fuel for cooking and rarely, for heating the house. Cloth is scarce and clothing is worn until it falls apart; after that the rags are used to make the soles of cloth shoes. The shortage of wood for all purposes has long been acute. and farm buildings are made of pounded earth. mud bricks, and, in the rice region, of bamboo lathe and mud plaster. Floors are of earth and only the dwellings of the wealthier farmers have glass windows. The dominant fact of life in the Chinese countryside is poverty. This has grown steadily worse during the last hundred years as factory-made goods destroyed village handicrafts, usury and tenancy increased, wars and ineffectual governments brought disruption and oppression. and overpopulation became steadily worse. "The

1. Geo. B. Cressey, Asia's Land and Peoples, New York, 1944, p. 87. Cressey cites C. C. Chang "An Estimate of China's Land and Crops "Nanking. 1932; Cressey p. 88:"...an average farm family of 6.2 persons must obtain its entire livelihood from a farm of 4.18 acres of which but 3.76 [contd]

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II. BASIC ATTITUDES

181 One of the principal reasons for the stability and long life of the old order in China was its special homogeneity. The imperial government fostered uniformity of attitudes and values, and Chinese statesmen belived this to be a more binding, durable, and cheaper cement for the imperial order than government coercion. Old China was primarily a way of life, a system of values and attitudes, and on this premise the state was organized. A foreigner who wished to become "naturalized" had only to show that he accepted Chinese attitudes and values; this he did by adopting Chinese dress and speech and patterns of behavior.

181 668 This characteristic of the old order is one of the reasons why we find no important regional variations in basic attitudes. The other reason is that the Communist government is as determined in enforcing a uniformity of values and attitudes. and far more resourceful than was the imperial government of the past.

There are, however, certain local variations in temperament and ethos which effect, to a minor degree, the basic attitudes and values. A few of these will be noted. For the variant attitudes and values of ethnic and religious minorities, see the chapters on Ethnic Groups and Religion.

181 There have been profound changes in basic
668 attitudes over the last century and particularly
178 during the last five years. Change has been brought about by two factors. The first is the disintegration of the old social and political order resulting from its failure to adapt itself to the problems and pressures of the modern world. Consequently, people became criticial of the older attitudes and, in increasing numbers, adopted newer "modern" attitudes and values which were considered better suited to a modern China. The second is the power of the Communist state, which, in the last five years, has been used to inculcate a new and uniform set of values and attitudes.

181 These two factors are closely interrelated.
668 Thus, the Communists have been making a sympathetic use of individual and group-dissatisfaction with the old order to inspire and promote the acceptance of the new attitudes and values; the latter's appeal has been particularly strong with youth -- especially adolescents -- and with women who have been taught to regard the old social order as tyrannical and oppressive. The following will illustrate this point:

> Co-operative agriculture has
> organization,
> and women are not left out.
> In the old society we were badly
> mistreated,
> but the new society teaches
> friendship and love.[29]

29. Fu-nu San-tzu Ching [Three-character Classic for Women], Hsin-hua Publishing House, 1950, Op. 21. [cont'd next page]

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In addition to capitalizing on discontent, the Communists have been making a peculiar use of traditional attitudes and values. Certain values from the old order still have a strong emotional appeal for the Chinese people. And the Communists seek to make the new order more acceptable by associating some of its elements with selected elements from the traditional culture. For example they insist that as a guiding principle of personal behavior the idea of "struggle" (tou-cheng) must replace that of "harmony" (ho).[30] People are taught to struggle for self-erfection and to engage in class struggle, in the struggle for a new China and in the struggle against deviation even when this involves attacking their friends. This is utterly contrary to the old ideal of harmony in personal relations, an ideal that means in practice a comfortable adjustment to one's natural and human environments. Yet in urging all to struggle, the Communists insist that the ultimate goal of all struggle is the Ta-t'ung-ching-yü -- the traditional utopian ideal of a harmonious, frictionless social order.[31]

[29. from previous page] Three-character rhymed verses were widely used in traditional China for the indoctrination of the young.

30. Cf. Arthur F. Wright, "Struggle vs. Harmony: Symbols of Competing Values in Modern China," World Politics, Vol. VI (Oct. 1953), pp. 31-44.

31. Mao Tse-tung, On People's Democratic Dictatorship, 3rd ed., Peking Foreign Languages Press, 1950, pp. 16-17. For Mao, of course, the term means ultimate world-wide Communist utopia.

181 In discussing certain attitudes and values
448 we should bear in mind that the power of the old and the appeal of the new vary not according to regions but according to social groups. It was among the population of modern cities like Shanghai that the old values were first challenged by the pressures of modern problems, but among the peasantry and rural gentry, despite many discontents and tensions, the old ways still prevailed.[32] Intellectuals and members of the new industrial and commercial groups were the first to discard traditional attitudes and dopt Western values; among other groups this process was slower. These variations affect Communist tactors to the extent that different kinds of persuasion are used with different groups. But the final goal is adoption of the attitudes and values decreed by the Communist leadership.

A. Good and Bad

183 In traditional China the prevailing belief was
577 that man was inherently good and that social harmful behavior occurred only when men lacked guidance or were placed in adverse circumstances. For example, if the ruler of the state or his officials or the father of the family failed to provide for the basic physical needs of individuals, their dependents were likely to rebel. Or if those in authority failed to provide instruction, particularly if they failed to set an example in conduct, then those subordinate to them would have no guideposts to the good and would fall into evil ways.

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35. For example, as later as 1941-43, one anthropologist found in rural Yunan that the traditional value of hsiao (filial submission) was
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